

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 896

To facilitate nationwide availability of 2–1–1 telephone service for information and referral on health and human services, including volunteer services, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 17, 2005

Mr. BILIRAKIS (for himself, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. UPTON, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. INSLEE, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. RUSH, Mr. TOWNS, Ms. SLAUGHTER, and Mr. WAXMAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To facilitate nationwide availability of 2–1–1 telephone service for information and referral on health and human services, including volunteer services, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Calling for 2–1–1 Act
5 of 2005”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) The Federal Communications Commission
2 has assigned 2–1–1 as the national telephone num-
3 ber for telephone service for information and referral
4 on human services, declaring that 2–1–1 best satis-
5 fies the public interest in allotting the limited re-
6 source of this abbreviated number. In 2005, the
7 Commission will assess the widespread utilization of
8 the 2–1–1 telephone number and evaluate whether
9 to continue the assignment of that telephone number
10 for that service.

11 (2) The number “2–1–1” is an easy-to-remem-
12 ber telephone number that facilitates critical connec-
13 tions between individuals and families seeking serv-
14 ices, volunteer opportunities, or both and appro-
15 priate human service agencies, including community-
16 based and faith-based organizations and government
17 agencies.

18 (3) There are approximately 1,500,000 non-
19 profit organizations in the United States. Individuals
20 and families often find it difficult to navigate
21 through a complex and ever-growing maze of human
22 service agencies and programs, spending inordinate
23 amounts of time trying to identify an agency or pro-
24 gram that provides a service that may be imme-
25 diately or urgently required and often abandoning

1 the search from frustration or a lack of quality in-
2 formation.

3 (4) At the Federal, State, and local levels, gov-
4 ernment funding supports well-intentioned programs
5 that are not fully utilized because of a lack of access
6 to and information on such programs by the public.
7 Program administrators have indicated that there is
8 a need for a simple way to connect those eligible for
9 programs with available program resources. 2-1-1
10 telephone service will reduce the number of inappro-
11 priate calls to government offices by directing con-
12 sumers to the appropriate human services agency,
13 resulting in a more effective use of government serv-
14 ices.

15 (5) A national cost benefit analysis conducted
16 by the University of Texas estimates a net value to
17 society of a national 2-1-1 system approaching
18 \$130,000,000 in the first year alone and a conserv-
19 ative estimate of nearly \$1,100,000,000 over 10
20 years.

21 (6) Many families need information on govern-
22 ment and not-for-profit services that provide high
23 quality health care, public health information related
24 to bioterrorism threats, mental health services, drug
25 treatment, elder care, help for victims of domestic vi-

1 olence, disaster recovery, and volunteer opportuni-
2 ties.

3 (7) Individuals often need support, services, or
4 both when suffering emotional distress, having suici-
5 dal thoughts or behavior, contemplating violence, or
6 using drugs or alcohol.

7 (8) Americans desire to volunteer and become
8 involved in their communities. This desire, together
9 with a desire to donate to organizations which pro-
10 vide human services, are among the reasons to con-
11 tact a center which provides information and referral
12 on volunteer opportunities and human services. A
13 simple call to 2-1-1 will help a citizen find the vol-
14 unteer opportunity they seek.

15 (9) Following the September 11, 2001, terrorist
16 attacks, an estimated 400 telephone hotlines were
17 established in New York, New York, for various
18 funds and services, creating a confusing network for
19 victims and volunteers to navigate. A Comptroller
20 General report on charitable aid following the ter-
21 rorist attacks found that “families of victims gen-
22 erally believed they had to navigate a maze of service
23 providers in the early months” and that “good infor-
24 mation about and easy access to available assistance
25 could help survivors in the recovery process”.

1 (10) The 107th Congress recognized the impor-
2 tance of 2–1–1 telephone service in community pre-
3 paredness and response by including use of that tele-
4 phone number for public information as an allowable
5 use of funds under grants for preparedness and re-
6 sponse to bioterrorism and other public health emer-
7 gencies under section 319C–1 of the Public Health
8 Service Act (42 U.S.C. 247d–3a), as added by sec-
9 tion 131 of the Public Health Security and Bioter-
10 rorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002
11 (Public Law 107–188).

12 (11) While 37 percent of the population has ac-
13 cess to 2–1–1 telephone service in 29 States, inad-
14 equate funding prevents access to that telephone
15 service throughout each of the States. 2–1–1 tele-
16 phone service is currently available statewide only in
17 9 States.

18 (12) Rapid deployment nationwide of 2–1–1
19 telephone service as a means of access to informa-
20 tion about and referral on human services requires
21 collaboration among State governments, comprehen-
22 sive and specialized information and referral centers,
23 including Child Care Resource and Referral Agen-
24 cies, human service organizations and service pro-
25 viders, emergency management and homeland secu-

1 rity officials, telephone companies, and other rel-
 2 evant entities.

3 (13) 2-1-1 telephone service facilitates the
 4 availability of a single repository where comprehen-
 5 sive data on all community services is collected,
 6 maintained, and updated regularly, reducing costs
 7 and duplication of efforts. The reliable data provided
 8 through 2-1-1 telephone service helps to better as-
 9 sess the needs of our communities and to imme-
 10 diately mobilize resources toward those needs.

11 **SEC. 3. GRANTS TO FACILITATE NATIONWIDE AVAIL-**
 12 **ABILITY OF 2-1-1 SERVICE FOR INFORMA-**
 13 **TION AND REFERRAL ON HUMAN SERVICES.**

14 (a) GRANTS REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Health
 15 and Human Services shall award a grant to each State
 16 to carry out a program for the purpose of making 2-1-
 17 1 telephone service available to all citizens in the State
 18 for information and referral on health and human services,
 19 including volunteer services. These grant dollars shall not
 20 supplant existing funding streams or services.

21 (b) GRANT TO BE AVAILABLE FOR EACH STATE.—
 22 In awarding grants under this section, the Secretary shall
 23 develop a formula for allocating grant amounts among the
 24 States so that a grant may be awarded to each State seek-
 25 ing a grant.

1 (c) REQUIREMENT ON SHARE OF ACTIVITIES.—

2 (1) REQUIREMENT.—A State may not be
3 awarded a grant under this section unless the State
4 ensures that at least 50 percent of the resources of
5 the program funded by the grant will be derived
6 from other sources.

7 (2) IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS.—The require-
8 ment in paragraph (1) may be satisfied by in-kind
9 contributions of goods or services.

10 (d) LEAD ENTITY.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—A State seeking a grant
12 under this section shall carry out this section
13 through a lead entity meeting the requirements of
14 this subsection.

15 (2) 2–1–1 COLLABORATIVE.—An entity shall be
16 treated as the 2–1–1 Collaborative for a State under
17 this subsection if the entity—

18 (A) exists for such purpose under State
19 law;

20 (B) exists for such purpose by order of the
21 State public utility commission; or

22 (C) is a collaborative entity established by
23 the State for such purpose from among rep-
24 resentatives of—

- 1 (i) an informal existing 2–1–1 state-
- 2 wide collaborative, if any, in the State;
- 3 (ii) State agencies;
- 4 (iii) community-based organizations;
- 5 (iv) faith-based organizations;
- 6 (v) not-for-profit organizations;
- 7 (vi) comprehensive and specialized in-
- 8 formation and referral providers, including
- 9 current 2–1–1 call centers;
- 10 (vii) foundations; and
- 11 (viii) businesses.

12 (3) REQUIREMENTS FOR PREEXISTING LEAD
13 ENTITIES.—An entity described by subparagraph
14 (A) or (B) of paragraph (2) may be treated as a
15 lead entity under this subsection only if such entity
16 collaborates, to the extent practicable, with the orga-
17 nizations and entities listed in subparagraph (C) of
18 that paragraph.

19 (e) APPLICATION.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—The lead entity on behalf of
21 each State seeking a grant under this section shall
22 submit to the Secretary an application therefore in
23 such form as the Secretary shall require.

1 (2) INFORMATION.—An application on behalf of
2 a State under this subsection shall contain informa-
3 tion as follows:

4 (A) Information on the program to be car-
5 ried out by the lead entity of the State so that
6 every citizen with phone service may dial the 2-
7 1-1 telephone service in order to plan to make
8 available throughout the State 2-1-1 telephone
9 service for information and referral on human
10 services, including information on the manner
11 in which the lead entity will develop, sustain,
12 and evaluate the program.

13 (B) Information on the sources of re-
14 sources for the program for purposes of meet-
15 ing the requirement in subsection (c).

16 (C) There should be a statewide database
17 available to all citizens as well as all human
18 service programs, through the Internet, that
19 will allow them to search for programs or serv-
20 ices that are available according to the data
21 gathered by the 2-1-1 programs in the State.

22 (D) Any additional information that the
23 Secretary may require for purposes of this sec-
24 tion.

25 (f) SUBGRANTS.—

1 (1) AUTHORITY.—In carrying out a program to
2 make 2–1–1 telephone service available throughout a
3 State at no charge to the caller, the lead entity of
4 the State may make subgrants to such persons or
5 entities as the lead entity considers appropriate for
6 purposes of the program, including subgrants to pro-
7 vide funds—

8 (A) for the provision of 2–1–1 telephone
9 service;

10 (B) for the operation and maintenance of
11 2–1–1 call centers; and

12 (C) for the collection and display of infor-
13 mation for the statewide database.

14 (2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In awarding a subgrant
15 under this subsection, a lead entity shall consider—

16 (A) the ability of the person or entity seek-
17 ing the subgrant to carry out activities or pro-
18 vide services consistent with the program;

19 (B) the extent to which the award of the
20 subgrant will facilitate equitable geographic dis-
21 tribution of subgrants under this section to en-
22 sure that rural communities have access to 2–
23 1–1 telephone service; and

24 (C) the extent to which the recipient of the
25 subgrant will establish and maintain cooperative

relationships with specialized information and referral centers, including Child Care Resource Referral Agencies, crisis centers, 9–1–1 call centers, and 3–1–1 call centers, if applicable.

(g) USE OF GRANT AND SUBGRANT AMOUNTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Amounts awarded as grants or subgrants under this section shall be used solely to make available 2–1–1 telephone service for community information and referral on human services to all citizens of the State with phone access, including telephone connections between families and individuals seeking such services and the providers of such services.

(2) PARTICULAR MATTERS.—In making 2–1–1 telephone service available, the recipient of a grant or subgrant shall, to the maximum extent practicable—

(A) abide by the Key Standards for 2–1–1 Centers as specified in the Standards for Professional Information and Referral Requirements for Alliance of Information Referral Systems (AIRS) Accreditation and Operating 2–1–1 Systems; and

(B) collaborate with human service organizations, whether public or private, to provide an

1 exhaustive database of services with which to
2 provide information or referral to individuals
3 utilizing 2-1-1 telephone service.

4 (3) USE OF FUNDS.—Amounts of a subgrant
5 under subsection (e) may be used by grantees for
6 Statewide and regional planning, start-up costs (in-
7 cluding costs of software and hardware upgrades
8 and telecommunications costs), training, accredita-
9 tion, public awareness, evaluation of activities, Inter-
10 net hosting and site development and maintenance
11 for a statewide database, database integration
12 projects that incorporate data from different 2-1-1
13 programs to a single statewide database, and the
14 provision of 2-1-1 telephone service.

15 (h) REQUIREMENT ON ALLOCATION OF GRANT
16 AMOUNTS.—Of the amounts awarded under this section,
17 an aggregate of not more than 15 percent shall be allo-
18 cated for evaluation, training, and technical assistance,
19 and for management and administration of subgrants
20 awarded under this section.

21 (i) REPORTS.—The lead entity of each State awarded
22 a grant under this section for a fiscal year shall submit
23 to the Secretary, not later than 60 days after the end of
24 such fiscal year, a report on the program funded by the
25 grant. Each report shall—

1 (1) describe the program funding by the grant;

2 (2) assess the effectiveness of the program in
3 making available to all citizens with phone service
4 State 2–1–1 telephone service for information and
5 referral on human services in accordance with the
6 provisions of this section; and

7 (3) assess the effectiveness of collaboration with
8 human service resource and referral entities and
9 service providers.

10 (j) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

11 (1) HUMAN SERVICES.—The term “human
12 services” means services as follows:

13 (A) Services that assist individuals in be-
14 coming more self-sufficient, in preventing de-
15 pendency, and in strengthening family relation-
16 ships.

17 (B) Services that support personal and so-
18 cial development.

19 (C) Services that help ensure the health
20 and well-being of individuals, families, and com-
21 munities.

22 (2) INFORMATION AND REFERRAL CENTER.—
23 The term “information and referral center” means
24 a center that—

1 (A) maintains a database of providers of
 2 human services in a State or locality;

3 (B) assists individuals, families, and com-
 4 munities in identifying, understanding, and ac-
 5 cessing the providers of human services and the
 6 human services offered by the providers of such
 7 services; and

8 (C) tracks types of calls referred and re-
 9 ceived to document the demands for services.

10 (3) STATE.—The term “State” means the sev-
 11 eral States, the District of Columbia, the Common-
 12 wealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam,
 13 American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the
 14 Northern Mariana Islands.

15 **SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appro-
 17 priated to carry out this Act, for fiscal years 2006 and
 18 2007, \$150,000,000, and for each of fiscal years 2008
 19 through 2011, \$100,000,000.

20 (b) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts appropriated pursuant
 21 to the authorization of appropriations in subsection (a)
 22 shall remain available until expended.

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